Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory

ISSN: 1600-910X (Print) 2159-9149 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rdis20

Neoliberalism and fascism in the short twentieth century: collective intellectuals, anti-communism and the rise of neoconservatism

Blake Stewart & Thibault Biscahie

To cite this article: Blake Stewart & Thibault Biscahie (26 Jan 2026): Neoliberalism and fascism in the short twentieth century: collective intellectuals, anti-communism and the rise of neoconservatism, Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory, DOI: 10.1080/1600910X.2025.2609567

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2025.2609567

Published online: 26 Jan 2026.

Submit your article to this journal

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rdis20

DISTINKTION: JOURNAL OF SOCIAL THEORY
https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2025.2609567

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

Neoliberalism and fascism in the short twentieth century: collective intellectuals, anti-communism and the rise of neoconservatism

Blake Stewart [a] and Thibault Biscahie [b]

[a]Department of Politics, York University, Toronto, Canada; [b]Centre de recherche en droit public (CRDP), Faculté de droit, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada

ABSTRACT

This article examines the ideological rapprochements operated between proponents of (neo)liberalism and fascism during the European interwar crises, and their continuities within the US-dominated postwar 'liberal international order'. Using a neo-Gramscian analytical framework, we focus on the various transnational elite discourse coalitions and collective intellectuals that gave rise to a (neo)liberal/far-right nexus within the transatlantic bloc in the 'short twentieth century'. Neoliberalism and fascism both embody class projects favouring capitalist accumulation at the expense of social redistribution. Both are driven by a hatred of communism and socialist solutions, and by a willingness to preserve the bourgeois status quo. On the economic front, their proponents support austerity and free trade politics, and endorse xenophobic, racist, militaristic and civilizational discourses. In the interwar period, this convergence took the form of 'authoritarian liberalism' and manifested in a racist and patriarchal streak in early ordoliberal and neoliberal thinking. During the Cold War, the conjunction happened in the shape of various 'neoconservative' and fusionist transnational networks committed to a regressive strategy for the 'liberal international order', with collaborations between Western 'liberal' governments and the far-right through support to anti-communist collectives united in a common interest of undermining the left. In both periods, the aim remained to separate economics and empire from the political by all possible means.

KEYWORDS

Neoliberalism; fascism; authoritarian liberalism; neoconservatism; parapolitics; austerity; anti-communism

Introduction

Large sections of the political and social theory literature take for granted that there exists a clear-cut distinction between liberal/neo-liberal purportedly 'democratic' political philosophies and fascist forms of ideology. Political liberalism would thus promote parliamentarianism and the rule of law, and economic liberalism would uphold laissez-faire (in its classical form) or organize competition under the aegis of the state (in its neoliberal form). At the global level, liberal governance would advocate for the creation of 'free-market' oriented, multilateral regulatory institutions. Fascism, on the other hand, would be an anti-democratic, anti-liberal and ultranationalist ideology endorsing the use of extreme violence as political strategy.

We argue that the distinction between these two ideologies, both in terms of politico-economic governance and within the realm of knowledge production, is far murkier than usually admitted. This paper thus examines the rapprochements operated between proponents of these doctrines during the European interwar crises, and their continuities within the US-dominated 'liberal international order' (LIO) framework in the postwar period. We do so by developing a neo-Gramscian analysis focusing on the various transnational elite discourse coalitions and collective intellectuals (Gill 1991) that gave rise to a (neo)liberal/far-right nexus within the transatlantic bloc in the 'short twentieth century' (Hobsbawm 1994, xii), i.e. from the 'world revolution' wrought by World War I to the breakdown of the Soviet bloc (1914–1991).[1]

We contend that countering the Communist and Soviet 'threats' motivated this rapprochement between neoliberal and fascist individuals and collectives. Indeed, liberalism's authoritarian side historically reveals itself in times of crisis, especially when a bolstered working-class threatens existing relations of production (i.e. 'proletarianization'), or when alternatives to the prevailing world order take shape on the global stage.

CONTACT Thibault Biscahie thibault.biscahie@umontreal.ca Pavillon Maximilien-Caron (8e étage) Université de Montréal 3101, chemin de la Tour, Montréal (Québec), Canada H3T 1J7

© 2026 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Our longue durée perspective situates the rapprochement between authoritarian strands of liberalism and fascism in the European interwar, and it is from this vantage point that we underline points of convergence between neoliberal and fascist traditions that subsisted the chaos of World War II. These links are both substantial and inter-personal, actualized in elite networks and conferences between the 1920s and the end of the Cold War, attesting to the survival of fascism and demonstrating certain continuities across the deeper tectonic shifts of structures of rule and accumulation during the short twentieth century. Our point is that although the (neo)liberal/fascist nexus did not translate across mass movements over the whole period, it existed consistently across elite networks and contributed to the rise of so-called 'neoconservatism', a global governance alliance consummated during the Cold War between economic neoliberals and anti-communist Western supremacists.

To illustrate this economic and societal convergence, the paper first provides methodological background to our neo-Gramscian elite framework focusing on elite 'common sense' as opposed to mass, popular appeal to liberalism and fascism. Our definition of ideology aligns here with the building of a hegemonic coalition, as opposed to the orthodox Marxist 'false consciousness' approach. In the second section, we account for the well-documented tendency, in periods of economic crisis, for liberal and 'centrist' political formations to drift towards far-right authoritarianism as a defense mechanism against pressures from below and the rise of left-wing forces, with the purpose of favouring the interests of industrialists, landlords and capital owners and taming the power of organized labour. We draw on Italian, British and German politics to substantiate this claim. The section also addresses the inclination for authoritarian – if not fascistic – ideas and worldviews among some of the neoliberal intellectuals who participated in the Lippmann Colloquium, which paved the way for the creation of the Mont Pelerin Society.

The third section demonstrates that neoliberal ideas in the 1970s were spread by both liberal internationalist and racist collective organic intellectuals such as Propaganda Due, Cercle Pinay, the World Anti-communist League or the Jerusalem Conference. These dual-state organizations and thought/action collectives organized transnationally to challenge the revolutionary potentials of the global left and formed an elite neoliberal/far-right nexus at the heart of the postwar US-led international order and its constellation of institutions. This represented an attempt to fuse the ideologies of Wilsonian liberalism with nationalist jingoism, notably finding common cause in support of Western militarism and surveillance against the Soviet bloc, anti-colonial movements in the Global South, and counter-hegemonic social forces within the West. So-called 'neoconservatism' thrived on this muddled 'liberal' ideological terrain which endowed its militaristic approach to social order with a progressive ethical gloss, despite its roots in various anti-communist collective intellectual organizations more associated with far-right politics than with the centrist 'liberal establishment'.

Elite collective intellectuals and the construction of an 'imperial common sense'

It would be misleading to frame fascism as a sole response to liberalism's excesses or neoliberalism's failure on the basis that fascist experiments often chronologically follow (neo)liberal experiments. Indeed, theses inspired by Karl Polanyi's 'double-movement' (1944) posit that the vagaries and damages resulting from 'disembedded' markets gave birth to reactionary counter-movements of the fascist type, and that by extension contemporary neofascism emerges from neoliberal capitalism (Cox and Skidmore-Hess 2022). Although we find these interpretations partly compelling, we stress that the relationship between these two forms of governance must be complemented with scrutiny of the ideological and programmatic convergence between these distinct but in many ways similar doctrines. While the double movement stresses the mass appeal (or lack thereof) of (neo)liberalism and fascism, we focus on their ideational manufacturing through elite networks and collective intellectuals. To go beyond a reading of fascism as a mere 'reaction' to liberalism, we thus argue that neoliberalism and fascism both embody class projects favouring capitalist accumulation at the expense of social redistribution. Both are driven by a hatred of communism and socialist solutions, and by a willingness to protect and preserve the bourgeois status quo. These political objectives were embedded – although in an uneven, sometimes contradictory fashion – within various collective organic intellectuals from the interwar and Cold War eras.

The primary focus of this research will be on the elite intellectuals and collective intellectual organizations which have contributed to the formation of what Stephen Gill (2012, 506) describes as the 'imperial

common sense' of Western governance ideology during the twentieth century; a supremacist governance doctrine which permits 'the USA and its principal allies to consume the lion's share of global resources in ways that are often violent, unjust and unsustainable'. We will argue that such an 'imperial common sense' has involved a fusion of (neo)liberal ideas related to economic governance with notions of Western geopolitical supremacism more typically associated with the far-right and fascism.

Neo-Gramscians in the field of International Relations have pioneered a research agenda that is critical of the field's state-centrism and explores the role of transnational actors, organizations, and ideas in the building of US-centered liberal hegemony since the postwar period (Cox 1987; Gill 1993; Morton 2003; Van der Pijl 1984). Such a hegemonic coalition has included the coordination of elite actors and organizations from various states within the LIO. For example, Stephen Gill's seminal work *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (1991) examines the role of the Trilateral Commission as an elite collective intellectual organization which aided the construction of a US-centred transnational capitalist hegemonic bloc during the 1970s. A neo-Gramscian research agenda then analyzes elite intellectuals, collective intellectual organizations, and transnational social forces, and how they contribute to the construction or refurbishing of capitalist hegemony and ruling class ideology during moments of crisis. Jan Rehmann (2015, 440) notes:

> [G]ramsci focuses on what later ideology-theorists described as the 'materiality' of the ideological, its 'trenches' in civil society, 'hegemonic apparatuses', 'organic' or 'traditional' intellectuals, complex and multiple power relations, etc. This materialistic shift does of course not indicate a break with Marx and Engels' approach, which targeted, as we have seen, not just forms of consciousness but real 'ideological powers', apparatuses, 'ideological forms', 'ideological estates' and 'conceptive ideologists' that can in turn be seen as part of what Gramsci called the 'integral state', consisting of 'political society' and 'civil society', 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (1971, 263).

The liberal-far-right fusion in elite governance discussed in this piece was instilled in part by the emergence of various intellectual organizations that helped harmonize a set of ideas that are often viewed as disparate by both liberals and figures associated with the far-right. A deeper investigation into such organizations during the Cold War reveals that disentangling these two ideological tendencies from one another in fact obscures the symbiotic dimensions of their ideologies and the collaborative efforts of their associated proponents. Oliver Eagleton (2023) notes: 'An avowedly "liberal" economic philosophy, fascism was concerned with shrinking the state to its repressive and ideological functions while clearing the way for private competition'.

To begin, we should first establish what is meant by an 'ideology' within a Critical Theory approach to IR. Jorge Larrain (1991) notes that in Marxist/Neo-Marxist social sciences there are two broad perspectives towards the role of ideology: (1) an orthodox perspective, that refers to ideology as relating to 'false consciousness', all ideas which serve to mystify or mask the actual conditions of capitalist social relations and their inherent contradictions; and (2) what can be described as a neo-Gramscian approach towards ideology that 'accounts for the formation, articulation and transformation of discourses, currents of thought, [and] political ideas' (Larrain 1991, 21), as well as the elite intellectuals who contribute to the building of hegemonic ideological coalitions. While such perspectives overlap, this article will focus on the latter, analyzing the collective intellectual organizations which have contributed to a liberal-far-right nexus for hegemonic governance. We will note that the emergence of such a nexus intersects with the period of organic crisis in the West during the twentieth century. Moreover, we acknowledge that the formation of a dominant ideology also involves the incorporation of various sub-ideologies during moments of crisis (Poulantzas 1979, 76). Larrain (1979, 81) notes:

> [G]ramsci distinguishes two kinds of ideologies: historically organic ideologies (those 'which are necessary to a given structure') and arbitrary or 'willed' ideologies. Gramsci favours the former concept, giving rise to the conception of ideology as a class *Weltanschauung*. As he puts it, 'one might say "ideology" here, but on the condition that the word is used in its highest sense of a conception of the world'. In this conception the problem is how a world-view may preserve the unity of the social bloc.

Terms such as 'thought collectives' (Mirowski and Plehwe 2015), 'knowledge regimes' (Campbell and Pedersen 2011), 'epistemic communities', 'brain trusts' (Shoup and Minter 1977), and 'collective intellectuals' (Bourdieu et al. 1991, 2002) have been used by social scientists to describe those groups that collectively seek to obtain positions of ideological leadership or hegemony within systems of

governance. Here, we will use the term elite 'collective intellectual' to refer to those organizations which seek hegemony over the 'field' of governance knowledge production. Such elite collective intellectual organizations within the LIO include ruling class 'power elites' (those in positions of authority and leadership within industry, political party structures, the security apparatus) as well as their associated elite 'organic intellectuals' (those actors who are not necessarily members of the ruling class but articulate ruling class ideology to those inside and outside the ruling class). Within collective intellectual organizations, there are also disparate 'discourse coalitions', which can be described as 'the ensemble of a set of storylines, the actors that utter these storylines, and the practices that conform to these storylines, all organized around a discourse' (Pautz 2011, 429). Such discourse coalitions simplify and condense various policy issues and sub-ideologies to construct a shared interpretation or narrative regarding a perceived threat or crisis by combining normative claims and factual information (Pautz 2011). Within the ruling class power bloc – and even within a particular collective intellectual organization – competing discourse coalitions emerge to address shifting conditions of crisis and represent ideological contestation within the ruling class.

Discourse coalitions are not static, but rather fluid, and often undergo transformations or hybridizations alongside changing circumstances within a particular state-societal complex or world order. For example, one can observe how formally 'liberal' collective intellectual organizations within the LIO have cultivated and fostered 'discourse coalitions' which are open to what can be described as far-right ideas and strategies regarding governance, particularly during moments of crisis. During the twentieth century, elite 'liberals' in the West have found common cause with the far-right and fascists; using elite collective intellectual organizations as sites for the development of authoritarian and anti-communist discourse coalitions which synchronize the worldviews of these political factions and their sub-ideological commitments as a means to reproduce/stabilize capitalist social relations and create a united front against the counter-hegemonic socialist-left.

The ideology of liberalism and that of the far-right movement in the West are often contrasted within mainstream social sciences as well as by the actors, organizations, and movements associated with each political faction. However, many critical scholars have noted that the ideology and practice of liberal governance (e.g. idealism, free markets, private property rights, rule of law, limited government, self-determination) have always involved authoritarian and exclusionary ideas and policies associated with far-right governance (Landa 2009; Losurdo 2011; Tosaka 2024). Furthermore, certain far-right political leaders (e.g. Augusto Pinochet, Jörg Haider) have sought to incorporate policies of neoliberal economic governance with their broader authoritarian or 'post-fascist' socio-political project, which (like interwar fascism) 'reverses the Enlightenment tendency to assimilate citizenship to the human condition' (Tamás 2000, 48). Much like liberalism, it is difficult to reduce fascism to a simplistic or singular ahistorical definition. While a denial of universal humanism has always been at the heart of the fascist project, much like liberalism, fascism and fascist ideology can take various forms. Nicos Poulantzas (2008, 265) notes:

> As Togliatti correctly reported at the time, there is nothing more false than to consider fascist ideology a unified and univocal 'system': 'Fascist ideology contains a series of heterogeneous elements . . . Beware the tendency to consider fascist ideology as something solidly constituted, finished, homogeneous . . .'. In fact, the role of fascist ideology among the masses nowhere involves the slightest repetition of an identical discourse, a vehicle for the techniques of propaganda in the face of atomized and undifferentiated masses […] Quite to the contrary, this role is such that these ideologies and that discourse present themselves in a considerably differentiated way such that they are incarnated in diverse fascist politico-ideological apparatuses according to the different classes, class fractions and social categories to which they are addressed, which permitted them precisely to exploit the material conditions of existence of those classes and fractions. Fascist ideological discourse is, in fact, considerably different depending on whether it is addressed to the working class and is incarnated in the apparatuses especially intended for it (fascist unions), to the popular classes of the countryside or to the petty bourgeoisie (fascist party).

To analyze the short twentieth century's liberal-far-right nexus, we will discuss the elite intellectuals and collective intellectual organizations that have sought to synchronize the social forces of the (neo)liberal establishment with those of the far-right, as well as the policies that emerged as a result. The authoritarian liberal austerity policies pursued by Western states during the first half of the twentieth century and the rise of transnationalized anti-communism during the latter half underscore the unity of such social forces in opposition to the left. Conditions of profound crisis within the LIO created space for elite intellectuals

and collective intellectual organizations to fuse the ideas of liberalism and the far-right into novel discourse coalitions for Western governance. This article explores various elite transnational collective intellectual organizations that emerged in the twentieth century, the composition of such organizations, and the ideas and discourses for governance which they advanced or produced.

The interwar economic convergence: authoritarian austerity and the early theorizing of neoliberalism

Affinities between liberal and fascist thought and convergence in their governmental practices largely predate the advent of neoliberalism. Thus, this section investigates the period spanning from 1918 to 1939 to examine how liberals' and fascists' economic and social policies tended to intersect in times of crises to protect capitalism from pressures from below. This rapprochement fostered the development of the 'authoritarian liberalism' doctrine, which paved the way for inchoate conceptions of neoliberalism arising from the Lippmann colloquium and the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society. Despite their multifarious origins and beliefs, proponents of neoliberalism echoed at times racist and reactionary tenets constitutive of fascism.

Protecting liberal capitalism from crises and pressures from below

In most European nations, war economics entailed an unprecedented and extensive state control over the economy. During World War I, the Allied powers acquired decisive economic and logistical advantages and secured access to key raw materials through international cooperation in the form of war councils (Martin 2022). At home, strategic industrial production (mining, ammunition, railways and transportations, etc.) was being collectivized and governments directly employed millions of workers, subordinating private property to national interest, thereby demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between political and economic power. In Italy and Great Britain, the state assisted capitalists with deference. It became 'the main supplier and client of industry', procuring raw material, acting as guarantor of bank credits and discipliner of the labour force; it 'provided subsidies and coordinated effort' (Mattei 2022, 48). Capitalists gained exponentially more over the period, but the flip side was that the capitalist order was being denaturalized. The sacrosanct 'laws of the market' appeared to be a sham. Finally recognized as eminently political institutions, markets became the terrain of contestation to extend (or restrict) the limits of the possible on social and economic grounds. Consequently, the aftermath of World War I was a vibrant period of militantism and politicization that emboldened workers, prepared them to better defend their interests and envisage different forms of economic relationships that went beyond wage-labour. As war economics allowed workers to gain in agency, strike action surged, and guilds, cooperatives and unions flourished; it was a very dangerous period for bosses and industrialists.

The proletarianization of a bolstered working-class during the revolutionary 1920s triggered a convergence between liberals and fascists on the economic terrain. In Italy, the nationwide occupation of factories coordinated by the councils ignited the establishment's greatest fears and cemented the anti-socialist bloc across liberals, nationalists and conservatives alike before their eventual merging in the armed offensive of fascism. From 1920 to 1922, the squadristi roamed socialist strongholds, especially in the north of the peninsula, brutally attacking and murdering thousands of workers and syndicalists (Elazar 2000). This extreme violence paved the way for a 'direct' (industrial) form of austerity that entailed the banning of non-fascist unions and the assassination of opponents. Interestingly, a similar context of labour unrest led British liberals to use austerity to safeguard existing relations of production in the early 1920s. Nevertheless, British austerity was 'indirect' (monetary): the Treasury and the Bank of England drastically deflated the economy by increasing the interest rates and curtailing credit, inflicting heavy damage on British trade, orchestrating a surge in unemployment which crushed unions' power to press for social change, ultimately fortifying capitalism (Mattei 2022, 90).

In addition to the direct repressive actions undertaken by the squadristi against local socialist governments, the first years of fascism (1920–1925) exhibited troubling communions, as fascism had to compromise with existing (liberal) powers to consolidate itself. Indeed, fascism was able to divide liberals by appealing to the fear of the bourgeois class against the threat of 'the extremes' (Breschi 2012, 415–6): the clericals, but most importantly the socialists. This explains the moral support of many prominent Italian liberal intellectuals to fascism (Giovanni Gentile, Luigi Einaudi, and even Benedetto Croce before Giacomo

Matteotti's murder). Opposed to the parliamentary subterfuges of Giovanni Giolitti, they wished to establish a 'strong state' purportedly more faithful to the 'spirit of the *Risorgimento*' (Breschi 2012, 419–21). Furthermore, a 'liberal-fascist' current was also expressed in the journals *La Nueva Politica Liberale* (which brought together disciples of Gentile) and *Critica Fascista*, exhibiting strong anti-individualist, anti-naturalist and anti-democratic sentiments (Bianchi 2024). While fascism is usually acknowledged as antithetical to liberalism, the Italian experience showed that this relationship was far more complex, and that the liberal attempts at domesticating fascism were conducted in defense of capitalists and rentiers, and at the expense of pluralism and democracy. Rather than domesticating it, this liberal acquiescence facilitated and institutionalized the fascist project.

A few years later, a similar form of authoritarianism imbued political–economic decisions in late Weimar Germany, in a context of economic depression, geopolitical tensions and pressures from below, to which the governments of the Reich responded with the harshest austerity measures implemented under Chancellors Heinrich Brüning and Franz von Papen. With the global plummeting prices in raw materials, drastic budgetary cuts and extreme wage moderation bolstered German exports, at the expense of 6 million unemployed workers and the martyrdom inflicted to the Weimar constitution, since Brüning had no majority in the Reichstag and ruled with emergency powers (Article 48). Manipulating the semi-presidential constitution of Weimar was key to their efforts and underwrote what would become the primary tool used to separate economic decisions from democratic politics over the twentieth century: neoliberal constitutionalism.

The rise of authoritarian liberalism

In the twilight of the Weimar Republic, legal scholar Carl Schmitt was a central figure in the development of 'authoritarian liberal' (Heller 2015; Wilkinson 2021) governance. His slogan 'sound economy and strong state' (Schmitt 1998) was a response to what he derided as the inherent weakness of the late Weimar Republic, whose leaders 'succumbed to the clamor of the private interests and the social forces' and 'ruptured the separation between state and society with the result that state and society became essentially identical'. For Schmitt, the Weimar state was a socialized state that had become the extension of a divided and antagonistic society and attended to the social interests from the cradle to the grave because of unlimited mass democracy (Bonefeld 2022, 185–91). To remedy this situation, one had to develop what Freiburg economist Walter Eucken (1992) termed *Ordnungspolitik* (rules-based politics), i.e. an economic constitution to undo the 'economic state' (Wirtschafsstaat), a depoliticization of socio-economic relations and exchanges through the separation of state and society and the maintenance of spheres of economic interaction 'free' from state intervention.

Although defending economic liberalism, authoritarian liberalism was deeply illiberal in the meaning of political liberalism: 'intolerant of difference, impatient of parliamentary debate, and deeply fearful of democracy in mass society' (Wilkinson 2021, 25). For Schmitt, the ideal regime was plebiscitary: the people can only engage in acts of acclamation and say yes or no to questions posed to it from above by executive powers. As Werner Bonefeld (2022, 199) put it, 'the President […] was the one institution that possessed the monopoly of the ultimate decision to suspend lawfulness for the sake of rightfulness'. To prevent unrest, powerful German capitalist social forces adhered to this logic. Ossified and omnipotent President Paul von Hindenburg acquiesced to the liquidation of Weimar parliamentarianism by a clique of industrialists and Junkers. Repudiating the logic of democratic rule, they eventually passed over to the Nazi camp to prevent their worst nightmare: the rise of the communist left.

Crises constitute moments of political opportunity enabling elites to restructure social relations and curtail democratic participation. During these critical conjunctures, one may therefore note a clear convergence between the authoritarian practices of 'centrist' liberal regimes *à la* Brüning and the more fascistic elements and policies that similarly aim at implementing a 'sound economy and a strong state'. Both logics were deeply restorative in character: despite revolutionary attires, fascism remained a developmental project from above that promoted a vision of economic modernity without however challenging the existing structures of capital accumulation and class rule, rather reinforcing them. Italian fascism was thus akin to a 'passive revolution' (Gramsci 1971).[2] The fascist movement in power had effectively incorporated what Robert Cox (1987, 195–6) termed 'the praxis of trasformismo', and Mussolini's first government was 'as broadly comprehensive a coalition of existing parliamentary fragments as Giolitti ever could have mustered'.

Fascists emulated methods and stratagems used by the leading classes since the *Risorgimento* to maintain their power, while keeping the illusion of socio-political change intact.

Just like British liberals had imposed austerity to counter the new might of organized labour, and in a similar vein to authoritarian liberalism, fascism was a fearful petty-bourgeois reaction against the possibility for the working-classes to organize politically and re-organize work (as in the Italian factory councils of the *Biennio Rosso*). It may also be interpreted as a reaction against the international crisis, that occasioned an upward transfer of wealth from the disenfranchised small and medium bourgeoisie to the 'big bourgeoisie', which was partly linked to the rise of finance-associated new technologies of accumulation such as the joint-stock company (Short 2015, 108–9). The recourse to fascism can therefore be understood as a pragmatic strategy for averting a complete revolution: the state developed the productive forces of industry and temporarily improved the lot of workers, but did not empower them, keeping them under the direction of the traditional ruling class, thus protecting the bourgeois status quo.

It must be stressed that what made the period distinctive was the presence of a robust left internationalism. The spectre of communism and sovietism (Spartacist uprising in Berlin, Bolshevik revolutions in Russia and Hungary, creation of the Comintern, etc.) provided a fertile ground for the transnational defense of socialism as an alternative to liberalism, and for its response: the convergence between authoritarian liberals and fascists. Indeed, the bourgeois alignment to the far-right constituted a defense mechanism. With their rejection of the Front Populaire's ambitious social programmes, 'better Hitler than Blum' was the French bourgeoisie's position after the Munich Agreement, as philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1938) argued. At that juncture, the fascists seemed the best positioned to protect the market economy and private bourgeois property from the growing power of left unions and the working-classes.

The fascist underpinnings of early neoliberal theorizing

On the intellectual front, the neoliberal and ordoliberal projects were fundamentally about depoliticizing social relations in the wake of the tumultuous years that followed WWI and the Great Depression. In the late 1930s, it was becoming urgent for a variety of powerful bosses, industrialists, civil servants and thinkers to envisage new ways of thinking about the market economy, as the liberal doctrine was experiencing its worst intellectual crisis and the European continent was able to collapse into the deepest chasm. Convened in Paris in October 1938, the Lippmann Colloquium constituted the foundational encounter for several cliques of European intellectuals expressing nascent and alternative (neo)liberal proclivities (Audier 2012; Denord 2009). Ordoliberalism and so-called 'paleoliberalism' (a term coined by Alexander Rüstow and later associated with the Chicago School) emerged there in tandem but diverged significantly following the creation of the Mont Pelerin Society (1947). They share a similar 'dualistic' view of human nature: the naturally economically competitive individual is the primordial source of market efficiency, and the market economy is the best way to serve his needs (Cerny 2016, 84–7). They thus abide by a core dynamic of 'marketisation': efficient markets regulated by the price mechanism are core components of capitalism. Yet, while they agree that competition is the crucial condition for capitalism to thrive, they diverge on the requirements for effective competition (Cerny 2016).[3]

It must be noted that some of the intellectuals gathered in Paris already exhibited an inclination for authoritarian – if not fascistic – ideas, solutions and worldviews. 'Renovating' liberalism and promoting 'economic freedom' meant overcoming obstacles to the functioning of the market order – particularly proletarianization, i.e. workers recognizing themselves as agents of history and demanding better wages and improved welfare. To prevent the proletarianization of social structures, the purpose of ordoliberal policy was to engrain entrepreneurship, private property and the free price mechanism into the fabric of society, with the purpose of sustaining market-liberal governance in the face of mass-democratic challenges, class conflicts and political strife (Bonefeld 2012, 634–5). For ordoliberals such as Alexander Rustöw, laissez-faire liberalism constituted an asocial and superficial belief: he and other colleagues advocated for a strong state capable of marginalizing the demos to secure the social-ideological preconditions of economic liberty. Accordingly, the strong state 'constrains the passions of self-interest, pluralist demands for protection from competitive pressures, and class specific demands for welfare security from the vagaries of the labor market' (Bonefeld 2022, 183). Authoritarianism is latent, if not explicit, in this tradition of thought: ordoliberalism socialises the losses by means of 'financial socialism', balancing the books by a politics of austerity, demanding individual enterprise and calling upon the individual to meet life's misadventures with courage, setting out to empower society in the self-responsible use of economic freedom (Bonefeld

2012, 636). The strong state is ever vigilant in preventing proletarianized social interests, the politicized worker and welfare measures from interfering with the free economy.

To counter the 'revolt of the masses' entailed by proletarianization, Wilhelm Röpke (1960) promoted the 'revolt of the elites', those that he called 'the aristocrats of public spirit'. Beyond a profound classism and elitism, Röpke's thought exhibited a pronounced racist streak, coming to the rescue of the white 'democracy' of the Apartheid South African regime in 1964, as it was increasingly under attack. Indeed, this archconservative's 'elitist, anti-democratic distaste for "mass society" led him to praise Apartheid South Africa and to justify the marginalization of its black demos' (Becher et al. 2021, 71). Yet, Röpke was not the only early neoliberal thinker to display such blatant racism. A sympathy and even appreciation of fascism formed a minor but significant strand of early neoliberal thought, with commonalities in their approach to democracy, race and patriarchy which founders of the Mont Pelerin Society were anxious to obscure after World War II (Maher 2023, 394–7).

Thus, Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises offered unqualified support for the fascist use of violence in opposition to communism in *Liberalismus* (1927), and French philosopher and convenor of the Lippmann Colloquium Louis Rougier argued for the repression of democratic rule in his main prewar writing *Les Mystiques économiques* (1938). These two ferociously anti-socialist thinkers nevertheless recognized by 1938 that the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy posed a threat to the liberal order. This contrasted with their French counterpart Bertrand de Jouvenel, who remained a strong supporter of fascism and viewed the working classes as unfit for participation in democratic governance, reinforcing the need for authoritarian leadership (Maher 2023, 398–9). Anti-collectivism and anti-socialism formed the crux of early neoliberal thinking, but so did racial differentialism, with a racialized understanding of the underpinnings of the market economy visible in the works of Mises, Röpke and Rougier.

Finally, a return to traditional gender roles was another key tenet of early neoliberalism common to fascist ideology, with patriarchy envisioned as a necessary feature for the reproduction of capitalism. As Maher reminds us (2023, 403–4), Mises' biological conception of gender 'led him to the conclusion that women by their very nature were incapable of being full participants in the market society' and Röpke identified the 'disintegration of the family' as one of the main consequences of processes of proletarianization. Dismayed by declining birth rates, Rougier and Jouvenel deemed defending the patriarchal order a civilizational struggle. This is consistent with the fundamental insight of the social reproduction literature, which highlights how the restructuring of women's labour (inside and outside of the household) is central to reproducing workers and society under authoritarian neoliberalism (Biscahie and Evrenosoglu 2025). Furthermore, the issue of childbearing becomes fundamental in times of geopolitical crises, when the question of militarization comes back to the fore, as the recent proposals made by Emmanuel Macron to foster the 'demographic rearmament' of France (Cordier 2024) made clear.

The intellectual activism of these neoliberal thinkers was nevertheless interrupted by the war, and their ideas would not come into fruition in the form of economic policies until the postwar era, this 'rules-based international order' which is examined in the next section. They would then develop in conjunction with a transnational far-right vanguard, with which they would stand united during the Cold War, against the challenge posed by the revolutionary transnationalism of the global left.

Cold war collective organic intellectuals and the rise of neoconservatism

Although it is often sanitized as a pristine 'rules-based' period of international relations, the Cold War era was a period of lawlessness and Western supremacism, as Western liberal governments frequently collaborated with the far-right in their fight against global communism. While many have contrasted the nationalist/populist politics of the far-right with the more moderate 'cosmopolitan' politics of the centrist liberal establishment, throughout the Cold War, the liberal establishment and the far-right have often acted in conjunction, in pursuit of a common interest of undermining the global left, the USSR, and anti-colonial social forces from below. Moreover, one can trace the roots of twenty-first-century right-wing reaction in the West (e.g. Bush-era 'neoconservatism' and the War on Terror) to collective intellectual organizations which emerged in the Cold War period. This section will discuss selected Cold War transnational anti-communist collectives and the discourse coalitions for governance that emerged alongside such organizations. It was through such bodies that a neoliberal–far-right nexus was consolidated amongst elites within the LIO.

The transnational anti-communist spider web

The decades following WWII are often synonymous with an era of Pax Americana and the emergence of a constellation of international alliances and transnational institutions commonly referred to as the 'liberal international order' (e.g. NATO, UN, EU, GATT, OECD). It was also during this time that various influential transnational 'collective intellectual' organizations would gain prominence within the US and its allies (e.g. Trilateral Commission, Club of Rome, World Economic Forum, Bilderberg Group). Such organizations were dedicated to constructing a 'centrist' consensus amongst the Western liberal ruling class and a shared governance rubric. However, transnational political organizing was not exclusive to 'centrist' or 'moderate' fractions of liberal elites but was also pursued by those willing to collaborate with reactionary far-right social forces during this period. Elite collective intellectual organizations such as the Propaganda Due (P2), Cercle Pinay, the World Anti-Communist League, and the Jerusalem Conference are just a few examples of an emergent elite transnational neoliberal–far-right anti-communist network which would help shape the politics of Western states/societies during the Cold War and beyond.

While anti-communist transnationalism would rapidly accelerate during the Cold War, such networks date back to the interwar period. Since the 1920s, a constellation of social forces opposed to communism, socialism, and social democracy would begin to organize within various Western capitalist states. This, often informal, constellation of actors and organizations would include politicians, intellectuals, religious leaders, neo-fascists, security state officials, nationalist émigré groups, paramilitary organizations, and capitalist elites who would collectively serve as a transnational far-right vanguard that would challenge both the revolutionary transnationalism of the global left, as well as other social forces within their states and societies who advocated for policies of détente or rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Within the US, Nick Fischer (2016, 80) has labelled this informal network the 'anti-communist spider-web', a configuration which would benefit from the left's lack of ideological cohesion during the Cold War. Not only did this network deputize far-right paramilitary actors into the anti-communist 'shadow wars', but it would also cultivate linkages between elite far-right ideologues that were already embedded within the institutions of state power in the 'liberal' US. Thus, spider web members such as Military Intelligence captain John Bond Trevor and Republican Representative Albert Johnson connected eugenics, immigration restriction, and anti-communist movements, seamlessly weaving ethnoracial and political objectives into doctrine and policy. The spider web also melded anti-communism and evangelical Christianity, seeding the modern religious right (Fischer 2016, xvii).

With the backing of the Reagan administration in the US and Thatcher government in the UK, the networks of far-right social forces associated with the transnational anti-communist spiderweb would proliferate. For advocates of anti-communist rollback, Vietnam Syndrome and the Nixon Administration's attempts towards détente with the Soviet Union directly contributed to America's declining influence on the world stage, triggering various crises for US leadership, including the 1979 Iranian Revolution (Iran hostage crisis) and the Nicaraguan Revolution. The so-called 'Reagan Doctrine' would then represent an even more assertively militaristic US foreign policy, which included funding new advanced nuclear weapons systems such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (so-called Star War), the promotion of 'unitary executive theory' (an interpretation of the US constitution advanced by the Heritage Foundation which suggests the president has full authority over the executive branch), as well as supporting various pro-Western anti-communist parties and guerilla organizations – specifically in Central America and the Middle East.[4]

Beginning in the 1960s, a new political subjectivity would be championed by certain neoliberal and far-right intellectuals within the US. This new political orientation would be called 'neoconservatism' and would be advanced by right-wing American intellectuals (many former Marxists), politicians, think tanks, and publications during the postwar period, including *Commentary Magazine* and *The Weekly Standard*. Neoconservatism lacks a clear definition and can be associated with a range of policies and ideological commitments, with some figures connected to militant anti-communism, Western Judeo-Christian chauvinism/exceptionalism, Revisionist Zionism, and a Burnhamian critique of the 'managerial state' (e.g. Irving Kristol, Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, David Horowitz, and Norman Podhoretz), as well as others associated with muscular Wilsonianism, an 'open society' governance philosophy, rhetorical support for the advancement of human rights, and a more 'moderate' centrist or Third Way politics (e.g. Tony Blair, Francis Fukuyama, Michael Ignatieff, and Victoria Nuland).[5]

Broadly speaking, neoconservatism can be described as an elite-led transnational anti-communist alliance pursued by hawkish establishment liberals and reactionary social forces on the far-right during the Cold War period – two (often overlapping) tendencies which sought to undermine the left (both domestically and within world order) to advance corporate capitalist governance and accelerate US/Western supremacism through militarism, subversion, and surveillance. Within the US government, this alliance was spearheaded by militaristic liberal politicians, such as Senator Henry 'Scoop' Jackson, who helped cultivate state bureaucrats such as Richard Perle, who would later serve as foreign policy advisor for both the Reagan and W. Bush administrations.[6] Such alliances would proliferate across the LIO during the late twentieth century through various elite transnational collective intellectual organizations and discourse coalitions supportive of this neoliberal–far-right nexus.[7]

The social forces (ideas, institutions, and material capabilities) associated with neoconservatism since the late twentieth century can be traced to the collective intellectual organizations that supported the Cold War's transnational anti-communist spider web. Such groups often had a coercive dimension, designed to directly counter threats of communist revolution or Soviet invasion, as well as an intellectual dimension which sought to organize politicians, capitalist elites, and militarists, to undermine the socialist left or other social forces supportive of détente, rapprochement with the Soviet bloc, or decolonization. Anti-communist organizations during the Cold War can be understood as part of a 'dual state' or 'deep state' apparatus, a parallel system of 'shadow governance' which includes various social forces which operate without democratic checks, transparency, or accountability. Peter Dale Scott (2007, 268) notes how the duality of the American state has become increasingly apparent since WWII. The institutions of the 'dual state' then include various exclusive collective intellectual organizations responsible for cultivating novel elite coalitions supportive of far-right ideas and authoritarian frameworks for capitalist governance which can be deployed during moments of profound crisis. Perhaps most importantly, such collective organizations would serve as major hubs for a constellation of elite neoliberal establishment figures and far-right social forces who sought consolidation under the banner of anti-communism.

Propaganda Due

Perhaps the most explicit example of a dual-state organization in Europe was Italy's Propaganda Due. Since the establishment of Turin's Freemason Lodge Propaganda Massonica in 1877, it was frequented by prominent members of the Italian elite. While freemasonry was deemed illegal under Mussolini's fascist regime, it would reemerge under the name Propaganda Due (P2) in the aftermath of WWII. Eleonora Lollo (2016, 62–4) notes how during the 1960s, P2 became a prominent organization which attracted members from the private and public sectors, serving as a hub for a transnational 'conservative' political network. After businessman Licio Gelli rose to power within the Lodge, the organization would undergo a series of radical reforms which would transform the nature of this institution. By the 1970s, under Gelli's leadership, the lodge's activities would shift towards reorganizing the state apparatus, consolidating class power, controlling the media and educational system, and breaking the power of organized labour in Italy.

To achieve such goals, the P2 would begin networking with other organizations in the 1970s, including state officials, politicians, bureaucrats, security/intelligence officials, journalists, capitalists, religious leaders, and aristocratic elites. Its membership would include various Argentinian politicians and military officials, as well as individuals from across the Italian political spectrum, including elite members of the Christian Democratic Party, the Italian Socialist Party, and neofascists from *Ordine Nuovo* and the Italian Social Movement. It was not until 1981 that the existence of the lodge would finally become public knowledge, with a list of the P2's elite membership and associates discovered in Gelli's residence during a police raid. Following this scandal, Gelli was expelled from freemasonry, and a parliamentary commission was designated to uncover the lodge's activities. The commission's report led to the dissolution of P2, the resignation of Prime Minister Arnoldo Forlani, and a ban on secret associations in 1982 after documentary evidence showed P2's involvement in 'financial fraud, terror attacks, and a private use of public institutions'. However, it would not be until 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, that Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti (also a member of Cercle Pinay) would formally disclose in parliament the extent of this network in Europe and its links to the American security/intelligence apparatus. The P2 scandal would reveal an elite network dedicated to governing from the shadows, which included a range of actors from across the political spectrum, both inside and outside the formal institutions of the Italian state. During the decades of

political violence between the 1960s and 1980s, informally known as the 'years of lead', Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini argued that the leadership of the Christian Democratic Party was, in fact, a continuation of fascism and accused it of contributing to a new and even more unpredictable form of transnational fascism. Pasolini (2019, 95) noted their delusion that they would be able to rely on the Vatican forever, and that they could still rely 'on a national army (as their fascist predecessors did), without noticing that the power they continued to wield was already maneuvering to create new armies, transnational in nature, which resembled technocratic police forces'.

While Pasolini would fall victim to an unresolved murder in 1975, his suspicion of a more technocratic extreme-right force percolating in 'Christian Democratic' Europe would be substantiated by revelations of US-led Cold War paramilitary initiatives such as Operation Gladio, where American 'stay-behind' military/intelligence operatives – in coordination with NATO allies and sympathetic far-right social forces across Europe – would seek to prevent, disrupt, or destroy social forces associated with (or perceived to be associated with) the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist left (e.g. communists, socialists, social democrats). It was not until the post-Cold War era that a larger picture of the activities of the Gladio network would come to light, exposing its links to organized crime syndicates, paramilitary organizations, and secret societies (Ganser 2005, 2006, 2014). Such activities would include invoking 'strategies of tension', which encouraged the acceleration of violence and mass insecurity through massacres and other forms of terrorism, which could be blamed on the left and justified under the aegis of preventing (the perceived) revolutionary activities of the Soviet Union and its sympathetic forces within the West.

Cercle Pinay and the 6I

French statesman Antoine Pinay and international lawyer Jean Violet founded the Cercle Pinay (sometimes referred to as the Cercle, Le Cercle, or Circle Violet) in 1952–1953, as an informal 'clandestine forum of European leaders who aimed to oppose the threat of communism and promote the vision of a Catholic and conservative Europe' (Leeson 2018, 65).[8] In the 1960s and 1970s, this organization used its media arm (e.g. Aginter Press and Valmonde) and intelligence resources to respond to the rise of the student 'counter-culture' movement and to attack left or left-leaning politicians opposed to South African apartheid and dictatorial regimes in Portugal and Spain (Teacher 2018, 248). While Christian Democracy and Catholicism would remain a crucial part of Cercle Pinay's identity (with key members from Opus Dei and the Knights of Malta), in the 1970s, the Cercle Pinay network would become increasingly Atlanticist, with notable participants such as German CSU leader Franz Josef Strauss, South African Prime Minister John Vorster, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Adreotti, French diplomat Jean Monnet, French propagandist Raymond Bourgine, Spanish politician Manual Frega, UK Conservative Party politicians Julian Amery and Margaret Thatcher, M16 operatives Brian Crozier and Anthony Cavendish, CIA agents William Colby and William Casey, prominent American statesmen and intellectuals such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, as well as capitalist elites such as David Rockefeller. The organization connected a terrorist Right in Italy and Latin America, to the American New Right in the United States and major conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation (Van der Pijl 1998, 127). Cercle Pinay was primarily funded by its members, German political party foundations (CDU's the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung), European businesses (Alphons Horten, Valmonde, SEL, Phillips), and the South African government – often through front organizations (Hänni 2014, 166). It was also involved in Vatican finances and supported by Carlo Pesenti of Italcementi, a multinational construction cement-producing company (Van der Pijl 1998, 127).

In 1976, a smaller power bloc or 'Inner Circle' (also referred to as the Pinay Group) was developed by Italian capitalist Carlo Pesenti within the broader Cercle Pinay organization. This Inner Circle would include intelligence operatives from the CIA, BND, and MI6 who sought to implement Cercle Pinay's prescriptions/ideas regarding Western governance through more direct forms (Hänni 2014, 162–4). Key members of this Inner Circle would include intelligence operatives such as Brian Crozier (MI6), Nicholas Elliot (MI6), Richard Stilwell (CIA), and Donald Jameson (CIA). At this time, Crozier, Elliot, and other fervent British elite anti-communists such as Norris McWhirter, would also set up the Shield Committee, an advisory group which would counsel Margaret Thatcher on subversive political matters (Michaels 2014, 156). In 1977, Crozier would develop 'the 6I', an even more surreptitious organization, which would circumvent domestic regulations and engage in covert funding, intelligence gathering, psychological warfare and

sophisticated propaganda campaigns against progressive causes with global implications, including nuclear disarmament (Teacher 2018, 172). Furthermore, two early 6I operations were in Latin America (advising the armed forces and security services in the use of psychological techniques in Argentina, Uruguay and in Chile, where Crozier spent several days closeted with General Pinochet to draft the new Chilean Constitution) and in Iran, where the 6I was involved in the brutal repression by the Shah's secret service SAVAK and the armed forces, which served only to feed the rising tide of Islamic fervour (Teacher 2018, 176). Kees Van der Pijl (1998, 128) notes:

> The presence of the architect of the Gladio undercover network in Europe, former CIA director Colby, at the two-day Washington conference of the Pinay Circle in 1979 along with the Heritage president Feulner, Paul Volker (The [Trilateral Commission] commissioner who, at the suggestion of David Rockefeller, was appointed to the chair of the Federal Reserve by President Carter to restore the discipline of capital on the world economy (Burch 1980, 3: 356n)), EU (and [Trilateral Commission]) commissioner Najres and Pandolfi, and other exponents of the emerging neo-liberal consensus, is only one illustration of how the worlds of clandestine violence and economic rationality are intertwined. Also, the envisaged use of provocative terrorism as part of a Pinay Circle campaign to bring Strauss to power in Germany (exposed by his old enemy, *Der Spiegel* magazine in 1982 – excerpts in Lobster 17, 1988: 14–15) reveals how violence was part of restoring class unity and discipline in the absence of hegemony.

The World Anti-Communist League

In the wake of various communist insurgencies and political victories in China and Indochina, transnational anti-communist social forces in Asia – in coordination with the CIA, the China Lobby in the US, and other anti-communist groups in Europe – formed the Asian Peoples Anti-Communist League (APACL). During the APACL's annual conference in Seoul in 1966, the decision was made to create the World Anti-Communist League (WACL). This organization would further expand the transnational anti-communist project, uniting disparate far-right organizations in Latin America, Asia, Europe, and the US – with regional chapters sending representatives from various domestic anti-communist organizations. The first conference was held in Taipei from 25 September to 1 October 1967, with 170 participants from 60 countries.

The WACL was developed to serve as another transnational far-right hub for the integration of disparate intellectuals (e.g. Suzanne Labin, Birger Nerman), religious leaders (e.g. Sun Myung Moon), establishment Western politicians and military officials (e.g. John Ashcroft, Robert Dornan, John K. Singlaub), former Nazis and white supremacists (e.g. Otto Skorzeny, Theodor Oberländer, Roger Pearson), crime lords (e.g. Yoshio Kodamo), as well as repressive dictatorial leaders in the Global South – including those associated with Operation Condor and death squad paramilitarism (e.g. Alfredo Stroessner, Mario Sandoval Alarcón). The WACL's membership also included figures involved in other elite anti-communist groups with links to the Western security/intelligence community, including Le Cercle. The membership (and partnerships) of the WACL have become scandalous for some members within the mainstream American liberal establishment. For example, John McCain, then a US House Representative, was an advisor to the US branch of the WACL, which was directly aiding the Contra death squads that were deployed to oust the left-wing Nicaraguan government in the 1980s. It was not until the Iran-Contra Affair that these linkages were exposed, including the illegal sale of arms to a sanctioned Iranian government and using the funds to support far-right Central American anti-communist militants. The overt nazi/fascist elements in the WACL would also eventually lead British chapter leader Geoffrey Stewart-Smith to resign in protest (Abramovici 2014, 114).[9]

The Jerusalem Conference

The Jerusalem Conference on International Terrorism would be held in July 1979, followed by the June 1984 Washington Conference on International Terrorism. These conferences brought together 'center-right' establishment liberals and far-right social forces who sought to fuse the threat of global communism and anti-colonial resistance in the Global South.[10] Both conferences were organized by the Jonathan Institute, an Israeli organization founded by Benjamin Netanyahu and named after his brother Jonathan Netanyahu, an IDF commando who was killed during the Entebbe Operation in Uganda, a raid against PLO and PLO-linked militants who hijacked an Air France flight in 1976. In addition to figures from Israel's political

and military establishment (e.g. Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu), the Jonathan Institute's international terrorism conferences would host numerous actors associated with American 'neoconservatism' (e.g. Henry Jackson, Daniel Moynihan, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Dector, Jack Kemp, Ben J. Wattenberg, Joseph Bishop). Moreover, its membership included figures such as Alun Gwynne Jones, Brian Crozier, Richard Pipes, and George H.W. Bush and others associated with major US-led anti-communist collectives (e.g. the Committee on the Present Danger, Cercle Pinay, and the Safari Club), as well as 'social democrats' from liberal states (e.g. David Barrett, then leader of British Columbia's New Democratic Party).

The objective of these 'terrorism' conferences was to establish the notion that terrorism, in and of itself, represented an organized international political movement, one which was directly linked to the Soviet Union, and required a concerted global counter-offensive (Ahmed 2005; Netanyahu 1981/2017). The politics of anti-terrorism would homogenize all (perceived) enemies of Western imperialism to be terrorists, terrorist supporters, or terrorist sympathizers with tangible links to the Soviet Union. It would also slander more inclusive transnational institutions such as the UN, which conference chairman Benzion Netanyahu (father of Benjamin Netanyahu) would describe as an institution that 'serves as a springboard and clearing house for the terrorists' campaign' (Netanyahu 1981/2017, 4). The conferences would then set the stage for what would eventually become a Global War on Terror, with various members of the conference making appeals for transnational coordination, solidarity, and coalition-building to confront this transnational multi-layered threat. Here we can see how, even during the Cold War, the social forces connected to the transnational elite liberal-far-right nexus were laying the foundation for an alliance and governance framework that would transcend narrow anti-communism (e.g. against major 'communist' state actors and their state clients), and would pursue a broader policy of rollback and pre-emptive action against the global left, multilateralist institutions, anti-colonial movements, and other (real or perceived) challenges to Western supremacism across world order under the rubric of 'counter-terrorism'.

Neoconservatism or liberal-far-right nexus?

The anti-communist organizations developed during the Cold War would contribute to a new 'anti-terrorism' discourse coalition which would expand and refurbish certain anti-communist ideas/frameworks into a new form of 'imperial common sense', one which attracted support from 'liberals' and far-right social forces and would create a basis of consent for a Western supremacist neoliberal imperium that would survive the collapse of the Soviet Union. The anti-communist organizations and networks that have emerged since the twentieth century are not simply a reaction to liberal internationalist governance, or some centrist orientation between liberalism and fascism, but rather are emblematic of the elite liberal-far-right nexus at the heart of the postwar US-led liberal international order. Liberal internationalism is a class-based, elitist hegemonic system of ideological legitimation embedded in (mostly US) elite knowledge networks. As it is imbued with racial, colonial and orientalist assumptions, this system is unable to embrace an international order based on diversity and equality (Parmar 2019, 533).

The abstract or ideological alliances which began to emerge in the context of the Cold War and the fight against global communism, specifically, so-called 'neoconservatism', was an attempt by elite intellectuals in the West to synthesize liberal ideology (e.g. free markets, individualism, internationalism) with certain aspects of right-wing conservative ideology (e.g. social conservatism, authoritarianism, chauvinism, imperialism). Rather than a novel ideology, neoconservatism represents the inseparability of liberalism and the far-right in the practice of Western liberal governance. The objectives of the liberal-far-right collectives of the Cold War were to undermine progressive social forces within leading Western states (e.g. subversive 'counter-culture' movements in the West which were opposed to US imperialism in Vietnam and elsewhere) and create a new 'imperial common sense' for the LIO to challenge (real or perceived) counter-hegemonic social forces from the USSR and the global South. Emerging as a major political force during the 1980s under Reagan and Thatcher, the term neoconservatism has been applied to various so-called centre-right conservatives and centre-right liberals who have a shared interest in promoting policies of Western supremacism and neoliberal economics. Rather than viewing so-called neoconservatism as a moderate 'centrism' which lies between liberalism and fascism, the history of the Cold War shows that this orientation is better described as a liberal-far-right nexus which has been pursued by a transnational constellation of reactionary elite actors and organizations within the LIO.

At first glance, it may appear to the reader that the far-right movement, its ideas, institutions, and social forces, were simply instrumentalized by state-security services seeking to advance the interests of the Western liberal establishment since the postwar period. However, such forces should not be conceptually reduced to simply being the last-resort 'shock troops' that are deployed by military/intelligence apparatuses of dominant Western liberal states whenever advantageous to their core geopolitical/economic interests. Rather than simply being transplanted onto the states and societies of the LIO, far-right social forces and their ideological assumptions can be found within various allied states within the transatlantic bloc long before the formal establishment of many keystone LIO institutions, including its major intelligence services such as the CIA (established in 1948), as well as the EU (or its predecessor institution the ECSC founded in 1951), the UN (1945), the Bilderberg Group (1954), and NATO (1949). Such networks included former Nazi officers, the mafia, the Christian fundamentalist right, as well as reactionary aristocratic elites – social forces which have historically been both ideologically and materially supportive of fascism/far-right politics when threatened with mass democracy, atheism, or proletarian class struggle (specifically revolutionary Marxist-Leninism). The complex and opaque nature of such operations makes it difficult for social scientists to discern whether – or when – the so-called liberal establishment was simply instrumentalizing or coopting the far-right movement, or if the social forces of the far-right had, in some capacity, wrested power from more moderate forces within the liberal establishment.

The far-right has then occupied a unique position within the politics of the LIO during the postwar period, which has made it difficult to determine whether it is: (1) an antithetical/counter-hegemonic force in relation to the LIO and its system of global governance; or (2) simply a tool which is wielded/controlled by ruling liberal states/elites to achieve political objectives whenever expedient. The ambiguity of centre-right neoconservatism as a political ideology/governance strategy adds a layer to general confusion regarding the far-right's role in governance within the LIO. Such an alliance is better understood as not an ideology in and of itself, but rather representative of an elite liberal-far-right nexus for Western governance which emerged out of conditions of profound crisis. As Alexander Anievas and Richard Saull (2020, 376) note, far-right ideologies provide an important ideopolitical imaginary to compensate for the intense dislocations and sense of anomie characterizing moments of crisis in the liberal-capitalist order. Ruling-class forces draw on this 'reserve army' to help thwart revolutionary challenges and offer an alternative ideological legitimation of capitalist social orderings, but they can never fully control it.

Conclusion

In this piece, we have examined the actors and organizations associated with the neoliberal-fascist nexus in the short twentieth century. Rather than the antithesis of liberalism, or some centrist compromise within the LIO, far-right ideas have been embedded within the 'imperial common sense' of elite liberal governance, and its social forces have been constitutive to the LIO's relative hegemony – particularly during moments of profound crisis.

During the interwar, the convergence between neoliberal and fascist thoughts and practices happened in reaction to the proletarianization of a bolstered working-class during the revolutionary 1920s. In a context of economic downturn, authoritarian liberalism later became the doctrine used to counter the international left and depoliticize socio-economic relations through coercive constitutional measures and plebiscitary endeavours, a set of methods which surely the fascists did not repudiate. Despite their heterogeneous membership, disdain for popular sovereignty and opposition to the organized left often went hand in hand with racialism and patriarchy within neoliberal intellectual thought collectives. In many ways, the interwar period was thus a harbinger of the rapprochement between economic liberalism and far-right authoritarianism, which would later characterize so-called neoconservatism.

While the definition of neoconservatism has undergone certain changes since the 1970s, neoconservatism has always represented an attempt to fuse both: (1) the ideologies of neoliberal economic governance with anti-democratic authoritarianism; and (2) the ideologies of Wilsonian liberalism with nationalist jingoism. Rather than representing a 'centre-right' compromise, or a midway between the far-right and liberalism, it is best to understand neoconservatism (to the limited extent to which it can be regarded as an ideology) as a fluid, highly adaptable, 'big tent' ideology, one which created space for far-right entryism

within the LIO's institutions and systems of governance, and carries different connotations for its associated actors, parties, and organizations.

Jean-François Drolet notes how ambiguity regarding the many contending variants of liberal ideology (e.g. classical, New Deal, pragmatic, neoliberal, Rawlsian) has generated a notorious tendency to evade a precise definition in favour of manifestly vague descriptions, and that so-called neoconservatives thrive on this muddled ideological terrain, endowing this militaristic approach to social order with an undeserving progressive liberal ethical gloss. This has similarly created space for neoliberal thinkers to advocate for authoritarian acts of state violence and fascistic governance programmes that insulate the capitalist class from counter-hegemonic democratic social forces.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Popularized by Eric Hobsbawm, the 'short twentieth century' concept was initially developed by President of the Hungarian Academy of Science Ivan Tibor Berend. In a similar vein to the 'long nineteenth century' it was meant to define historical eras by significant events, as opposed to the arbitrary beginnings and ends of centuries.
2. Adam David Morton (2007, 615) reminds us that Gramsci queried whether fascism was the most recent attempt in twentieth-century Italian history to further the transition to modernity: 'is not "fascism" precisely a new "liberalism"? Is not fascism precisely the form of "passive revolution" proper to the twentieth century, as liberalism was to the nineteenth?' (Gramsci 1988, 264–65).
3. With their contention that markets do not arise spontaneously and are created and maintained by a regulatory state, ordoliberals are more accommodating to a form of liberal interventionism. Conversely, paleoliberals such as Milton Friedman see markets as self-sustaining and advocate for a quasi-laissez-faire, which will be discursively endorsed by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.
4. Larry Pratt (1987, 63) defines the Reagan Doctrine as: '[An] aggressive strategy of counter-revolution whose purpose is not merely the containment of Marxism, but the "bleeding" and overthrow of radical anti-imperialist regimes in the Third World through economic pressure, the arming of right-wing proxies and insurgencies, and the use of force in so-called low-intensity conflicts'.
5. Far-right writer Douglas Murray (2006, 1), who has been associated with neoconservatism notes that rather than a dogmatic ideology 'Neoconservatism is a broad church, containing multiple tracks and directions of thought. And, since it is a type of thought and not a membership club or cult, establishing a lineage, never mind a definition, is not a task with obvious beginnings, middles or ends'. Similarly, Brandon High (2009, 479) notes how even in its early stages, there were major ideological differences between figures associated with the neoconservative movement.
6. Rather than a coherent/static political ideology, Anatol Lieven and John Hulsman (2006, 125) have argued that it is better to regard neoconservatism as a 'para-bureaucratic grouping' – one which is 'made possible by the American system's blurring the lines between government, pseudo-academia, the media and business'. Often resembling the think tanks developed by liberal Atlanticists in the early-mid twentieth century, American 'neoconservative' think tanks would help spearhead the new global project of anti-communist rollback promoted by the Reagan Administration, namely the Committee for the Free World, Hudson Institute, Manhattan Institute, Claremont Institute, Heartland Institute, Ayn Rand Institute, Atlas Network, Leadership Institute, and most importantly the Heritage Foundation. Such organizations would play a direct role in constructing Reagan's doctrine of 'peace through strength'.
7. In the post-Cold War era it can also be associated with collective intellectual organizations supportive of the Bush-era Global War on Terror, including the 2006 Euston Manifesto Group, The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, The Henry Jackson Society, and the Project for a New American Century.
8. As Minister of Finance of Charles de Gaulle, Antoine Pinay also coordinated alongside Jacques Rueff – the best representative of French ordoliberalism and organic intellectual *en chef* of de Gaulle – France's austerity-driven and first openly neoliberal reform plan, the Plan Pinay-Rueff (1958) which prioritized a balanced budget, monetary stability and the opening-up of trade following France's commitment to European integration (through the 1957 Treaty of Rome) and to transatlantic commerce through integration within the OECD. See: Chélini (2001). Despite his societal conservatism and economic liberalism, Pinay was not in line with the plan drafted under the aegis of Rueff and his bankers and *hauts fonctionnaires* colleagues.
9. Scott Anderson and Jon Lee Anderson note (1986, 12): 'The World Anti-Communist League hasn't merely borrowed these concepts or tactics from the Nazis; it has incorporated the Nazis themselves as well. Many of the

major figures behind the creation and promotion of the League are men who first practiced their brand of warfare in the streets, ghettos, and concentration camps of World War II Europe […] Today, their rhetoric is different; they no longer talk very much about the "Communist, Jewish, Freemason conspiracy" for now they have allies who need them to be more discreet than that. In 1986, as in 1936, they hide behind the buzzwords anti-Bolshevism and anti-communism to further their goals and to forge links with others'.

10. Presentations at the Jerusalem Conference on International Terrorism were compiled and published into a text volume edited by Benjamin Netanyahu titled *International Terrorism: Challenge and Response* (1981/2017).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Blake Stewart obtained a PhD in the Department of Politics at York University in 2025, with a double major in International Relations and Comparative Politics. Stewart's research is focused on the nature of political contestation within the so-called 'liberal international order' (LIO) in the wake of Brexit, Trump, and rising far-right social forces across Europe. His research analyzes the transnational and cumulative dimensions of political and ideological contestation within the West throughout the postwar period by exploring the elite organic intellectuals as well as the organizations and social networks in which they operate – namely elite think tanks, conferences, and scholarly journals. Through an analysis of contrasting elite intellectuals and their various social networks, his research then seeks to isolate the core components of political contestation within the LIO as they relate to twenty-first-century global governance.

Thibault Biscahie is a Research Fellow at the Centre de recherche en droit public (CRDP) in the Faculté de droit at Université de Montréal. He obtained a PhD in the Department of Politics at York University (Toronto) in 2022. He has taught courses in Political Science, International Relations, History and International Humanitarian Law at Université de Montréal, the University of Toronto and York University. His research focuses on French and European politics, the history and sociology of international relations, and the political economy of neoliberalism. In 2025, he created with Professor Karim Benyekhlef the Groupe de recherche en droit et économie politique (GREDEP, Research group in Law and Political Economy).

ORCID

Blake Stewart http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3735-4131
Thibault Biscahie http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0500-0814

Bibliography

Abramovici, P. 2014. The world anti-communist league: origins, structures and activities. In *Transnational anti-communism and the cold war: Agents, activities, and networks*, eds. L. Dongen, S. Roulin, and G. Scott-Smith,113–29. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Ahmed, H.H. 2005. Palestinian resistance and 'suicide bombing': Causes and consequences. In *Root causes of terrorism. Myths, realities and ways forward*, ed. T. Bjorgo, 87–101. London: Routledge.

Anderson, S., and J.L. Anderson. 1986. *Inside the league: The shocking expose of how terrorists, nazis, and Latin American death squads have infiltrated the world anti-communist league*. New York: Dodd Mead.

Anievas, A., and R. Saull. 2020. Reassessing the cold War and the Far-right: fascist legacies and the making of the liberal international order after 1945. *International Studies Review* 22, no. 3: 370–95. https://academic.oup.com/isr/article-abstract/22/3/370/5321117

Audier, S. 2012. *Néolibéralisme(s): une archéologie intellectuelle*. Paris: Éditions Grasset.

Becher, P., K. Becker, K. Rösch, and L. Seelig. 2021. Ordoliberal white democracy, elitism, and the demos: the case of Wilhelm Röpke. *Democratic Theory* 8, no. 2: 70–96. https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/democratic-theory/8/2/dt080204.xml

Bianchi, A. 2024. Fascism, anti-liberalism and liberalism in Italy. *Fascism* 13: 153–80. https://brill.com/view/journals/fasc/13/2/article-p153_1.xml?srsltid=AfmBOorGlPJ3Y5_Gd_yyN5SMXNQgM1VlN_Gsuvf34EUy42e5R3jICO5E

Biscahie, T., and L.D. Evrenosoglu. 2025. Social reproduction under authoritarian neoliberalism: from Gezi Park to the Yellow Vests. *Race & Class* 67, no. 2: 47–69. doi:10.1177/03063968251347118. https://journals.sagepub.com/

Bonefeld, W. 2012. Freedom and the strong state: on German ordoliberalism. *New Political Economy* 17, no. 5: 633–56. doi:10.1080/13563467.2012.656082. https://www.tandfonline.com.

Bonefeld, W. 2022. Economic constitution and authoritarian liberalism: Carl Schmitt and the idea of a sound economy. In *The idea of economic constitution: Genealogy and overview*, eds. G. Grégoire, and X. Miny, 182–203. Leiden: Brill Publishers. https://brill.com/display/book/9789004519350/BP000012.xml.

Bourdieu, P. 2002. The role of intellectuals today. *Theoria* 49, no. 99: 1–6.
Bourdieu, P., Sapiro, G., and McHale, B. 1991. Fourth lecture. Universal corporatism: the role of intellectuals in the modern world. *Poetics Today* 12, no. 4: 655–669.
Breschi, D. 2012. Fascism, liberalism and revolution. *European Journal of Political Theory* 11, no. 4: 410–25.
Burch, P.H. 1980. *Elites in American history*. New York; London: Holmes & Meier.
Campbell, J. M., and Pedersen, O. K. 2011. Knowledge regimes and comparative political economy. In *Ideas and politics in social science research*, eds. D. Béland, and R.H. Cox. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Cerny, P.G. 2016. In the shadow of ordoliberalism: the paradox of neoliberalism in the 21st century. *ERIS – European Review of International Studies* 3, no. 1: 78–92. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26593549
Chélini, M.P. 2001. Le plan de stabilisation Pinay-Rueff, 1958. *Revue D'histoire Moderne & Contemporaine* 48, no. 4: 102–23. https://shs.cairn.info/revue-d-histoire-moderne-et-contemporaine-2001-4-page-102?lang=fr
Cordier, S. 2024. Emmanuel Macron annonce un congé de naissance et un plan contre l'infertilité en vue du « réarmement démographique » du pays. Le Monde, 17 January. https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2024/01/17/emmanuel-macron-annonce-un-conge-de-naissance-et-un-plan-contre-l-infertilite-pour-le-rearmement-demographique-du-pays_6211291_3224.html.
Cox, R. 1987. *Production, power and world order: social forces in the making of history*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Cox, R.W., and D. Skidmore-Hess. 2022. How neofascism emerges from neoliberal capitalism. *New Political Science* 44, no. 4: 590–606. doi:10.1080/07393148.2022.2121135. https://www.tandfonline.com/
Dale Scott, P. 2007. *Road to 9/11: wealth, empire and the future of America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Denord, F. 2009. *Le colloque Lippmann. Aux origines du néo-libéralisme*. Bordeaux: Éditions Le Bord de l'Eau.
Drolet, J.F. 2010. A liberalism betrayed? American neoconservatism and the theory of international relations. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 15, no. 2: 89–118. doi:10.1080/13569317.2010.482361. https://www.tandfonline.com
Eagleton, O. 2023. New millennium fascists: The 2020s are not the 1920s, but fascist "potentials" remain in what passes for democracy. New Statesman, 5 December. https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2023/12/new-millennium-fascists (accessed October 20, 2025).
Elazar, D.S. 2000. Electoral democracy, revolutionary politics and political violence: The emergence of fascism in Italy, 1920-21. *The British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 3: 461–88. doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2000.00461.x. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com
Eucken, W. 1992. *The foundations of economics – history and theory in analysis of economic reality*. New York: Springer.
Fischer, N. 2016. *Spider Web: The birth of American anticommunism*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
Ganser, D. 2005. *NATO's secret armies: operation Gladio and terrorism in Western Europe*. London: Routledge.
Ganser, D. 2006. The ghost of machiavelli: an approach to operation Gladio and terrorism in cold War Italy. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 45, no. 2: 111–54.
Ganser, D. 2014. The "strategy of tension" in the cold war period. *Journal of 9/11 Studies* 39: 1–19.
Gill, S. 1991. *American hegemony and the trilateral commission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Gill, S. 1993. Gramsci and global politics: towards a post-hegemonic research agenda. In *Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations*, ed. S. Gill, 1–18. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Gill, S. 2012. Towards a radical concept of praxis: imperial 'common sense' versus the post-modern prince. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 3: 505–24.
Gramsci, A. 1971. *Selections from the prison notebooks*. Trans. and ed. Q. Hoare and G. Novell Smith. New York: International Publishers.
Gramsci, A. 1988. *A Gramsci reader: selected writings, 1916–1935*. Ed. By D. Forgacs. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
Hänni, A. 2014. A global crusade against communism: The circle in the 'second cold war'. In *In transnational anti-communism and the cold war: agents, activities, and networks*, eds. S. Roulin, G. Scott-Smith, and L. van Dongen, 161–74. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
Heller, H. 2015. Authoritarian liberalism? *European Law Journal* 21, no. 3: 295–301. doi:10.1111/eulj.12125. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com
High, B. 2009. The recent historiography of American neoconservatism. *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2: 475–91.
Hobsbawm, E. 1994. *Age of extremes. The short twentieth century 1914-1991*. London: Michael Joseph.
Landa, I. 2009. *The apprentice's sorcerer: liberal tradition and fascism*. Vol. 18. Leiden: Brill.
Larrain, J. 1979. *The concept of ideology*. London: Hutchinson & Co.
Larrain, J. 1983. *Marxism and ideology*. London: Macmillan Press.
Larrain, J. 1991. Stuart Hall and the Marxist concept of ideology. *Theory, Culture & Society* 8, no. 4: 1–28.
Leeson, R. 2018. Introduction: 'How We Developed a Consistent Doctrine and Some International Circles of Communication'. In *Hayek: A collaborative biography part XIII: 'Fascism' and liberalism in the (Austrian) classical tradition*, ed. R. Leeson, 3–78. London: Palgrave.
Lieven, A., and Hulsman, J. 2006. *Ethical realism: A vision for America's role in the world*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Lollo, E. 2016. Social capital accumulation and the exercise of power: the case of P2 in Italy. *Journal of Economic Issues* 50, no. 1: 59–71. doi:10.1080/00213624.2016.1147311. https://www.tandfonline.com/
Losurdo, D. 2011. *Liberalism: A counter-history*. London: Verso Books.
Maher, H. 2023. Neoliberal fascism? Fascist trend in early neoliberal thought and echoes in the present. *Contemporary Political Theory* 23: 392–410. doi:10.1057/s41296-023-00657-x. https://link.springer.com/article/

Martin, J. 2022. *The meddlers. sovereignty, empire, and the birth of global economic governance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Mattei, C. 2022. *The capital order. How economists invented austerity and paved the Way to fascism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Michaels, J.H. 2014. The heyday of Britain's cold war think tank: brian crozier and the institute for the study of conflict, 1970–79. In *Transnational anti-communism and the cold war: agents, activities, and networks*, eds. S. Roulin, G. Scott-Smith, and L. van Dongen, 146–60. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
Mirowski, P., and Plehwe, D. 2015. *The road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Morton, A.D. 2003. Historicizing Gramsci: situating ideas in and beyond their context. *Review of International Political Economy* 10, no. 1: 118–46.
Morton, A.D. 2007. Waiting for Gramsci: state formation, passive revolution and the international. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35, no. 3: 597–621.
Mounier, E. 1938. Lendemains d'une trahison. *Esprit Revue Internationale* 73: 1–15.
Murray, D. 2006. *Neoconservatism: why we need it*. New York: Encounter Books.
Netanyahu, B., ed. 1981/2017. *International terrorism: challenge and response*. New York: Routledge.
Parmar, I. 2019. Transnational elite knowledge networks: managing American hegemony in turbulent times. *Security Studies* 28, no. 3: 532–64. doi:10.1080/09636412.2019.1604986. https://www.tandfonline.com
Pasolini, P.P. 2019. The power vacuum in Italy (ENG). *Comparative Cinema* 7, no. 12: 91–7.
Pautz, H. 2011. Revisiting the think-tank phenomenon. *Public Policy and Administration* 26, no. 4: 419–35.
Polanyi, K. 1944. *The great transformation. The political and economic origins of our times*. Boston: Beacon Press.
Poulantzas, N. 1979. *Fascism and dictatorship: the third international and the problem of fascism*. London: Verso.
Poulantzas, N. 2008. *The Poulantzas reader: Marxism, law, and the state*. London: Verso.
Pratt, L. 1987. The Reagan Doctrine and the third world. *The Socialist Register* 23: 61–96.
Rehmann, J. 2015. Ideology-critique with the conceptual hinterland of a theory of the ideological. *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 3: 433–48.
Röpke, W. 1960. *A humane economy. The social framework of the free market*. Institute for Historical and Philosophical Studies, Inc. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company.
Schmitt, C. 1998. Sound economy – strong state : An address to business leaders. In eds. R. Cristi, Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism, 212–232. Cardiff, Wales University Press.
Scott, P.D. 2015. *The American deep state: Wall Street, big oil, and the attack on U.S. democracy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
Short, N. 2015. Passato e presente? Gramsci's analysis of fascism and the far-right. In *The Longue Durée of the far-right. An international historical sociology*, eds. R. Saull, A. Anievas, N. Davidson, and A. Fabry, 106–28. London: Routledge.
Shoup, L.H., and Minter, W. 1977. *Imperial brain trust, the Council on Foreign Relations and United States foreign policy*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Tamás, G.M. 2000. On post-fascism. *Eastern European Constitutional Review* 9: 48–56.
Teacher, D. 2018. Neutral academic data'and the international right. In *Hayek: A collaborative biography: part XIII: 'fascism' and liberalism in the (Austrian) classical tradition*, ed. R. Leeson, 245–320. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Tosaka, J. 2024. *The Japanese ideology: A marxist critique of liberalism and fascism*. Columbia University Press.
Van der Pijl, K. 1984. *The making of an Atlantic ruling class*. London: Verso Books.
Van der Pijl, K. 1998. *Transnational classes and international relations*. London: Routledge. 2005.
Wilkinson, M. 2021. *Authoritarian liberalism and the transformation of modern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Wilson, E. 2009. *Government of the shadows: parapolitics and criminal sovereignty*. London: Pluto Press.